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Bloody Newvs

FROM

SHREWSBURY,

BEING

A True and Perfect Relation of a Horrible Villain, by Name *Thomas Reynolds*, who lately lived at *Aldow*, neer *Ludlow*, in the County of *Salop*.

He before he was Eighteen years of Age, Murdered *Alice Stephens*, and her Daughter *Martha*, Cutting their Throats, as they were asleep, and having done, set their house on fire, which consumed several of the adjacent Houses.

He likewise set on fire one Goodman *Merick*'s House, while he, his Wife, and one Child difficultly escaped through the Flames.

Also he twice attempted to Murder one Mis. *Corfeilds*, but was disappointed; for all which, and many other smaller facts, as Robbery, Burglary, &c. He was Condemned and Hanged in Chains at *Shrewsbury*, the 14*th*. day of *March*, $167\frac{2}{3}$

With Allowance.

London, Printed for *R. Burton*, and *P. Brooksby*, next Doors to the Ball in *West-Smith-field*. 1673.

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Bloody News

FROM

SHREWSBURY,

BEING

A True and Perfect Relation of a Hor-

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Bloody News

From Shrevvsbury.

AT *Aldow*, in the Parish of *Leoak-Sag*, neer unto *Ludlow*, in the County of *Salop*, there lived a fellow about eighteen years of age, and though he were mean enough in his Parentage, Habit, and Education, yet no way despicable, except in his lewd life, and shameful death. His name was *Thomas Reynolds*, eminent for Pilfering, even from his Child-hood, which he had ever an audacious and peremptory way of denying. And as he increased in years, so he did not only in inclinations to do ill, but also in subtilty and strength, to prosecute the projects, which his wicked heart daily suggested to him, and to which his subtile head continually shewed him the way. Being grown to the Age of Sixteen, he became a notable hardy and sturdy Villain, excellently subtile in contriving, and admirably audacious in prosecuting any mischiefs whatsoever.

ever. Some of the moſt eminent you find in this Relation, from which it will not be very difficult to gueſs at the reſt.

Upon the Sixteenth day of *February* 1673. he was obſerved to riſe very early in the morning, before, or as ſoon as ever the day began to appear; and being asked what buſineſs he had to do ſo timely, he either anſwered churliſhly, or doubtfully, but however, went away with a reſolution of doing a Villany, that my hand ſhakes to Write of, and will I believe, make many a mans heart ake to read.

There lived at that time, in the ſame Pariſh, one *John Stephens*, and he was a very honeſt laborious man in his Calling; it ſeems he was a day labourer, and uſually went abroad every morning early to ſome or other of his Maſters thereabout to work, which he did this morning, as formerly he had done, leaving *Alice* his Wife, and his only Daughter *Martha* at home, to ſuch employments as became people of their degree and Sex: this was perceived and obſerved by our hatcher of Wickedneſs, the wretched *Thomas Reynolds*, who being informed by others, or fancying of himſelf that there might be ſomething in *Stephen's* houſe, worth the putting in practice of this his murderous deſign, animated by the Devil, or (what was almoſt as bad) by his own diabolical and miſchievous heart, he enters the houſe, about ſeven of the Clock in the Morning, and bringing with him a large knife made very ſharp, for that purpoſe, goes to their bed-ſide, and while they (poor wretches) were aſleep, not thinking of doing harm, or dreaming of reciving any, this bloody Miſcreant taking firſt the Mother, and afterwards the Daughter by the throat, he cuts them clean through the Wind-pipe, whence iſſued forth ſuch a fierce torrent of blood, as ſtew all about the face and cloaths of the Murderer, as if it had

deſigned to diſcover, or (according to its power) to revenge the injury done to thoſe bodies, to whom it had for many years been ſo friendly a Gueſt: but though at preſent its endeavours are too weak to effect its deſired revenge, till Gods time is come; yet in the mean while it crys loud for it, ſo loud that one time or other, the crys ſhall be aſſuredly heard; as you ſhall ſee hereafter.

After this bloody Fact, the Author of it thinking himſelf unſafe, and imagining, that ſhould the dead bodies be found in that gaſtly manner he might in time be diſcovered, he hardens himſelf in his Wickedneſs; and to ſecure all, goes with a Fire-brand unſeen, and ſets fire to the houſe, till it was all in Flames, which not only conſumed three or four of the adjacent houſes, but alſo the body of the murdered Gueſts it did contain.

Thus did that place which was a Shelter and Sanctuary to the living, prove a Grave, or rather an Urne to the dead; and they who before had preserved its Roof, then fed its Flames.

And now our bloody wretch thinking his Villany to have been consumed in those Flames it caused, goes to a Well to wash away the substance of the Blood, but not the guilt of it. And having given himself imaginary absolutions, he adventures boldly to behold his own Fires, as ever *Nero*, whom he out-did even in Cruelty.

Encouraged by this (as he called it) happy success, he thought himself in a very fair way to get an estate (as we say) out of the Fire, and therefore resolves to put in practice the Husbandry I have observed in some Countries, believing he might better his Estate by burning. To this purpose he resolves upon a design in all Circumstances exactly tallying the former, but only in the success of it.

There lived not far from this place one Goodman *Merick*, whose manner of life and other circumstances I (for brevities sake) omit, as not pertinent to our present Relation, supposing it sufficient to acquaint you that this *Thomas Reneals* with inventions equally bloody, and designs altogether as cunning, while the said *Merick*, together with his Wife and one Child were all in bed, sets fire to the house, which immediately, being Thatch, becomes a body of Flames, and the first Summons that the inhabitants received was an astonishing noise of Flame, which yet hardly appeared through the thick Clouds of smoak; *Merick* newly awaken'd, is strangely surprised, as well with the unexpectedness, as danger of the accident.

But

But he is no Salamander, he cannot ſtay there, nor had he leiſure to conſult how to go, but on a ſuddain takes up his Wife and Child, and carries them through the flames in the Sheet they lay upon: which had he not done with ſtrange dexterity and ſtrength; they had doubtleſs found there, both a Death-bed, and a Winding-ſheet, and had become like the former, as it were, Sacrifices to his Cruelty.

To what intent he acted this hainous Fact, whether out of Malice, or deſign of Gain, is not known: But certainly what ever his deſigns were, the means he made uſe of to accompliſh them, were the moſt unheard of, and Tragical, that any ſtory mentions.

After this he breaks open another Neighbours Houſe, while the people were abroad, and not finding in it a Booty anſwerable to his expectations, he falls to work with a Barrel of Metheglin they had in the Houſe, of which he taſted ſo plentifully, that he became very Drunk: Yet was he ſo cunning as to retreat into an adjoyning Barn, belonging to one Mr. *Baughs*; where he was Apprehended, and immediately committed by a Juſtice of Peace to *Shrewsbury* Goal: Where he received his Tryal the 11th of this Inſtant *March*, And by his own Confeſſion he was found Guilty of all the foremention'd Facts.

Together with the cruelty he had plotted againſt the Wife of one Mr. *Corfeilds* of *Ferny-hall*, whom he had twice attempted to Murder, but her Husband being at home, he was diſappointed.

But

But those he had the misfortune to effect, were sufficient to entitle him to the Gibbet; and accordingly Sentence was passed on him the 12th of the same *March*, to be Hanged in Chains, which was Executed on the morrow accordingly.

FINIS

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